RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 7th August, 1995/16 Sravana, 1917 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock.

Mr. Chairman: *in the Chair.*

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of Shri Birchandra Deb Burman, a former Member of the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd August, 1995 at the age of 75.

Born at Agartala in March 1920, Shri Deb Burman had his education at Calcutta University. A lawyer by profession, he always pleaded the case of the working class and the down-trodden people. He was closely associated with several organisations. He was also President of the Tripura State Indo-Soviet Cultural Society and Tripura Bar Association from 1974 to 1975. Shri Deb Burman started his Legislative career as a Member of the Tripura Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1967. He represented the State of Tripura in this House from April 1974 to April 1980 and evinced keen interest in the proceedings of the House.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri Birchandra Deb Burman.

I request Members to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

(Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convery to the members of the bereaved family our deep sense of sorrow and sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 101. The hon. Member is absent. Question No. 102.

*101. *[The questioner (Shri Iqbal Singh) was absent. For answer Vide Col. 32 infra]*

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, may I request you kindly to take up Question No. 101? You were kind enough to take up once.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But this is not a general practice.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: But, Sir, prices are very high. Therefore, some exception should be made.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: I also feel that this question should be taken up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We had discussed this issue in the House several times earlier.

SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL: A demand for a Calling Attention on this issue has also been made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 102.

Newsitem Regarding International Business Transactions

*102. SHRI KRISHANA KUMAR BIRLA:
SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "India among the most corrupt Nations Report" as reported in the Pioneer dated 16th July, 1995;

(b) if so, whether according to the survey conducted by "Transparency International" it has been revealed that there is corruption in the International business transactions;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Government have noted a report appearing in a newspaper. Apart from the newspaper report, Government do not have any other information. The report of the

survey appears to have been published in the US and a copy of the report does not appear to be available in India. In the absence of the report, it would not be possible to venture any opinion on the report.

(d) Does not arise.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: A report which is so derogatory to the Indian business and Indian morality.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Mr Chairman, Sir, according to a body called "Trasnparency International" which claims to be a global coalition against corruption in international business transactions — India is amongst the most corrupt countries in the world. According to this report, China and Pakistan fall in the same category. New Zealand, Denmark, Singapore and Finland are perceived to be the least corrupt countries. This body as has been confirmed by the hon. Minister is in the United States.

My first question is: (a) Has the Government of India written to its Embassy in the United States or to this body directly offering its comments on this report and questioning the basis of the findings? If so, what is the reply that it has received? (b) What steps does the Government propose to take to eradicate this impression about corruption in our country stated by the report of this body?

(c) What is the background of this body and the basis on which this conclusion has been arrived at?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Mr Chairman, Sir, I have no information about this body. I have no information about its status. We have sent a messsage to the Embassy of India in Washington to secure a copy of this report if it is available and send it to us. We have not received the reply. Sir, I may point out that substantially the same question was answered by the Prime Minister to an Unstarred Question on the 3rd August, 1995 in this House. The Prime Minister has given the same answer. Apparently his attention also has been invited to this report. We are awaiting a reply from the Embassy of India in Washington.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the answer of the Minister appears to be quite satisfactory. I only suggest that when he receives the reply, let him make a public statement about it so that all Members of Parliament can come to know what the reply is and what the position is.

The second part of my supplementary is: Would the Government of India agree to constitute a parliamentary committee to study corruption in international business transactions and suggest remedial measures?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, so far as my Ministry is concerned, if specific instances are brought to our notice about corruption in any international business transaction involving international trade, surely, Sir, we would look into the matter. We will approach the Chairman or the Speaker, if it becomes necessary to constitute such a committee. But it will not be possible to make a statement without any specific charge.

SHRI SOMAPPA R. BOMMAI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I suggest that this question be postponed to the next day because there is no reply? It is a very important question about corruption. The Government has not received any reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ghufran Azam. Not here ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: We don't have the report. If it comes, I will give it.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to put a question?

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Yes, Sir, I want to put a question.

But this question should be deferred to the next day until the Government receives the reply.

SHRI SOMAPPA R. BOMMAI: It would be better because the Government has not received any reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister hopes to receive a reply.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, you know better than I do about an Embassy. The moment this came, we have sent it to the Embassy to get a copy of the report. ...*(Interruptions)*... We have asked for a copy of the report. When the report comes, I will give it.

SHRI SOMAPPA R. BOMMAI: About corruption, the Chairman knows everything. I would like the Minister to agree to defer the question.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I leave it to the Chairman. ...*(Interruptions)*...I leave it to the Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, we will postpone it.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: That would be much better.

श्री रामदास अग्रवाल: करप्शन के मामले में चेयरमैन साहब को पता कहां से होगा? ... (व्यवधान)... चेयरमैन साहब को ज्यादा पता नहीं है भ्रष्टाचार के मामले में।

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I leave it to you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At least journalists could be asked by the Embassy. Some journalists reported this here. It is not very difficult to find out.

*103. *[The questioner (Shri V. Rajan Chellappa) was absent. For answer, Vide Col. 34 infra]*

Incidental Charges incurred by FCI

*104. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY:
SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the procurement incidental charges incurred by Food Corporation of India on wheat, rice and sugar per quintal during the last three years; and

(b) the distribution costs per quintal incurred by Food Corporation of India during the last three years on wheat, rice and sugar, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Food Corporation of India has reported that the procurement incidental charges incurred by FCI on wheat, rice and sugar during the last three years are as follows:—

(Rate Rs./quintal)

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Wheat	68.95	73.05	73.04
Rice	32.69	31.53	40.25

Levy sugar: (Procurement cost is included in distribution cost)

(b) The FCI has started calculating the distribution cost of wheat and rice separately only from 1993-94. Per quintal cost of distribution in the last three years was as under:—